

SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy 2025–2030

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‘Free as a Bird’ by Arianna Frisby, 9 years old, Allen Edwards Primary School.

‘Free as a Bird’ is the winning submission from our school artwork competition. The brief was to create a piece of artwork around the themes which children and young people shared as important to them during the strategy consultation. The themes included, local community, leisure, building independence, friends and family and having their voice heard.

About this document
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Foreword



Our borough plan, [Lambeth 2030: Our Future, Our Lambeth](#), sets out a vision to become a Child-Friendly Borough with social and climate justice at its heart. As a Council, we are deeply committed to ensuring that every child and young person has the best possible start in life, and that they are fully prepared to thrive as they transition into adulthood. We are proud of our ambition to support all of our children and young people, especially those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and we recognise the importance of fostering an inclusive environment across all our schools and settings.

We look forward to working with partners across Lambeth to deliver this strategy, which sets out our vision, progress to date, and priorities for the next five years. Its success will require partnership working across the council, NHS, educational settings, the voluntary and community sector (VCS), and our families.”

Cllr Ben Kind,
[Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education](#)



Our strong partnerships with schools and educational settings have been pivotal in cultivating a culture of inclusion and belonging. These relationships are fundamental to the success of our mission to ensure that every young person, regardless of their needs, is given the support they deserve. Our previous SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2021–24 set out several priorities for the partnership, and we are proud of the progress made. This year, we had one of the lowest exclusion rates and highest attainment outcomes for children and young people with an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) in England – a result of our joint efforts to support our pupils as best as possible.

We know there is more to do – which is why we have refreshed our strategy. Community voice is essential in shaping our services and support, which is why we have focused on the co-production of this strategy. Their continued involvement will ensure that our approach remains responsive and aligned with the needs of those it is designed to support.”

Andrew Carter,
[Corporate Director: Children, Families and Education](#)



Our SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy is the product of extensive engagement with the community and across the partnership. It is jointly owned by Lambeth Council and the South-East London NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB). We are committed to ongoing monitoring and improvement, responding to new evidence as it emerges. We are confident that this strategy, supported by our staff and community, will make a significant difference in the lives of our young people with SEND, ensuring they are equipped to succeed and thrive. The upcoming Ofsted Local Area inspection will be a critical opportunity to assess our progress and to identify areas for further development.”

Andrew Eyres,
[Corporate Director: Integrated Health and Care](#)

Introduction

We are delivering in an increasingly complex environment. Since the 2014 reforms, including the Children and Families Act 2014 and SEND Code of Practice, there has been an unprecedented level of growth in need amongst children and young people with SEND, and their families.

Across the country we are seeing a system in crisis, with rising needs and reduced budgets putting significant pressure on local authorities, partners and voluntary and community sector organisations providing children and their families with the support that they need to thrive. While we have managed our budget effectively compared to national averages and our statistical neighbours, we do face financial pressures from areas such as SEND transport. We also know how challenges across the wider systems that affect people's lives play a role in the way we experience education, from the recent pandemic and cost-of-living crisis changing what activities children and young people access both in and out of school, to the impact of good quality housing and safe spaces to learn.

The independent report published by ISOS Partnership and commissioned by the County

Councils Network and Local Government Association in July 2024 paints a stark picture:

“The SEND system is broken. The reforms instituted a decade ago in the Children and Families Act 2014 were developed with the best of intention [...] However, the growing reality is that a combination of unexpected need and unintended perverse incentives in the system exacerbated by this demand – alongside a general squeeze on public resources – have left parents, schools, health and councils all increasingly dissatisfied and often frustrated, as well as resulting in poorer outcomes for children.”

It's also a changing landscape. In 2023, regulators Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) created a new framework, to include Alternative Provision. The new [inspection framework](#) brings a sharper focus on **experiences** and **outcomes** for Children and Young People with SEND, with increased **accountability**, through annual meetings, responsive monitoring, and early re-inspections. The Department for Education also published a [SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan](#), which included a three-tiered approach to Alternative Provision, and a focus on mainstream inclusion.



This strategy is a response not only to national challenges, but to the experiences of our children and young people, families, communities and workforce locally. The number of children and young people in the borough is falling each year and our Pupil Place Planning Strategy is all about how we work together with families across the borough to manage change. At the same time, we know that SEND need is rising with a 41% increase in those with an Education, Health and Care Plan between 2018 and 2023. Lambeth is also a borough with high levels of deprivation, serious youth violence with a high proportion of First Time Entrants and a high proportion of those who speak English as an Additional Language (EAL).

It is essential that we work together across our partnership to provide inclusive and sustainable SEND support for now and future generations, from birth to adulthood. This strategy sets out our commitment to maintain and build upon our successes.

State of the Borough



Our Demographics

- Currently, 3,332 children and young people have an EHCP. This represents a **41% increase** between January 2018 and January 2023.
- Our **primary and secondary school age cohorts are projected to see the largest fall in numbers** (21% and 16% fall by 2030 from 2021 respectively).
- Lambeth has the **7th largest proportion of pupils with EHCPs** in their schools compared to national, and a **large SEN Support cohort**.
- The two largest areas of need, above England averages, are **Speech, Language and Communications**, and **Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**.
- A **large proportion of those with EHCPs are in state-funded mainstream schools**, almost 50% compared to 40% across England.

Despite this high level of need, we have strong outcomes, relating to attainment, exclusion, and employment. Our ambition is to maintain this success across all stages of life, across all settings, and for all needs.



Our Outcomes

- In **primary, our attainment is in line with England averages**, with our KS2 reading, writing, and maths (combined) ranking in the Top 20 England Local Authorities.
- At **KS4, EHCP Attainment 8 was notably higher** than statistical neighbours and England averages.
- At **KS5, our SEN Support students are in the top performing quartile** in England.
- The **persistent absentee rate in our special schools was the lowest among statistical neighbours**, and our attendance across all phases is in the top quartile in England.
- Lambeth's **suspension rates of EHCP and SEN Support pupils across all phases were both far below the England averages**, ranking in the best quartile.
- **EHCP and SEND support participation of 16- and 17-year-olds in Lambeth remains well above England averages**. 4.5% are NEET or unknown. This is less than half the England average.

Our Vision

Our borough plan, Lambeth 2030: Our Future, Our Lambeth, sets out bold ambitions for Lambeth's future. We want to be a borough with social and climate justice at its heart, working together so that children and young people can have the best start in life and so everyone can feel safe and thrive in a place of opportunity.

The Education and Learning Strategy is a key part of delivering on our ambitions. Lambeth's overall aim for children and young people is to ensure that:



All children and young people have excellent and inclusive experiences and outcomes across education, health, and social care, from birth to adulthood.”

We know there is more work to do to make this vision a reality. Our refreshed SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy builds on this and other existing strategies, such as All Age Autism Strategy and Health and Wellbeing Strategy, to ensure all of our children and young people are getting the support they need at the time they need it. We are committed to tackling inequality at the root cause, and that means recognising, celebrating and responding to the diverse communities that make Lambeth the place it is.

Our approach will centre on our values of Kindness, Accountability, Equity and Ambition, which were developed as part of our borough plan.

Kindness: we will lead with compassion in our engagement with young people and their families, ensuring that every interaction is grounded in empathy and respect.

Accountability: we will set clear expectations and establish robust monitoring systems to ensure that all stakeholders, including staff, students, and families, take responsibility for the outcomes of our SEND provision.

Equity: we will ensure that every student receives the individualised support they need,

with tailored resources and interventions that address specific challenges.

Ambition: we will aim high in our strategic outcomes, setting aspirational goals for our students' educational and personal growth.

This is how all families should expect to be treated by colleagues across the partnership, during every interaction, including case workers, healthcare practitioners or social workers and management. Whether it be a conversation in nursery about potential needs, or about preparations for adulthood.

One example of putting this into practice is through the Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) process. We should actively listen to the concerns and aspirations of both students and their families, fostering strong, trusting relationships. Each plan should reflect the unique needs and circumstances of the student. Through our Annual Reviews, we will ensure that progress is tracked, and responsibilities are clearly defined and met. EHCP targets and outcomes should be as ambitious as possible for each child and young person, with the right support in place to achieve them through a multi-agency approach.



Progress made since previous strategy

Our SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2021–24 focused on the areas for development outlined during our most recent inspection in 2020, as well as co-production with the community. This resulted in seven priorities, that were underpinned by actions, delivered across the partnership.

In this section we provide a short summary of achievements and progress made for each priority area, as well as any further actions to be embedded in our refreshed strategy.

Engagement with children and young people – we have examples of working well with children and young people to commission some youth and play services, and want to be more consistent

- Appointed a new SEND Youth Involvement Coordinator in April 2024 to ensure dedicated resource to engaging with children and young people with SEND, already reaching over 100 children and young people with SEND.
- Launched a SEND Young Inspectors Programme to help redesign services and gather insights. This has included reviewing our Local Offer and Short Breaks.
- Fund and support the Youth Council. Appointed Young Commissioners and Young Advisors to quality assure our work and support with commissioning.

Further action: We will embed children and young people's voice more consistently, including through a SEND Youth Forum, school councils, and SEND co-production and engagement group.

Co-production and decision-making with families – we are committed to improving engagement, listening to families about what has worked well and could improve

- Started an annual SEND Survey in 2023, receiving 140 responses, with in-depth written responses that shaped a year-long action plan. Launched our second Annual SEND Family Survey in 2024, receiving over 135 responses.
- Co-produced and developed both the SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2021–2024 and the new SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy 2025–2030.
- Over 75% of families involved in the EHCP process described the level of co-production as “good” and “fair”.
- Engaged with the Lambeth Parent Forum to shape key services, including the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme.

Further action: We will embed our SEND co-production and engagement group to give more opportunities to families to shape strategic decisions.

Progress made since previous strategy

An accessible Local Offer – we redesigned the Local Offer in 2021 and created a new role to maintain it. We will use this to further improve its accessibility

- Extensive redesign of the Local Offer in 2021, to ensure information is up-to-date and accurate.
- Created a new Local Offer co-ordinator post, to help maintain and improve the site in line with feedback received from the community.
- Set up two working groups to shape the Local Offer and boost engagement, including with representation from families.

Further action: Working groups will improve access and experience of using the Local Offer, including testing with families and young people.

Early identification systems and processes across the partnership – we are good at identifying needs, with strong relationships between education, health, and social care to support families with young children

- More assessments from an earlier age, despite falling birth rates, with a 41% increase in EHCPs issued over five years. Reduced developmental assessment times by more than half for under 5s and waiting times for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and physiotherapy.
- Created an Area Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)' team to support families and schools, including an Early Years specialist. Our 2024 SENCo survey received over 55 responses and highlighted the value of this new team.
- Appointed a specialist complex needs health visitor and two ASD home support workers for Early Years. Children and young people known to the Youth Justice Service receive access to a speech and language therapist.

Further action: We will continue to work on reducing waiting times for assessments and supporting families whilst they wait.



Building our workforce knowledge to meet needs – we need to support our workforce who are highly committed, and focused on delivering positive outcomes through training and resources

- Delivered training to Early Years Staff through Dingley's Promise – a charity specialising in Early Years and SEND.
- Rolled-out training on the EHCP process across the partnership.
- Established an Area SENCo team to support inclusion in schools that in a recent SENCo survey was identified as an asset to schools.
- Embedded and maintained a SENCo Network to ensure workforce development, including communication training led by speech and language therapists. The network has received positive feedback, evidenced by our SENCo survey.

Further action: We are rolling out SEND training, starting through the Social Care Academy, supported by the appointment of a Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO). This will help to improve awareness of frontline practitioners to signpost to the most relevant services in the council.

Progress made since previous strategy

EHCPs that reflect our complex learners over time – our EHCP assessments and Annual Reviews are timely, but we need to make sure that they are always high-quality

- Established The Hub, a multi-agency online case management system for EHCPs, providing faster and more consistent access to information, leading to more timely input from health practitioners.
- EHCPs consistently include longer-term educational ambitions for adulthood, resulting in strong outcomes compared to our statistical neighbours.
- Created a regular audit process to monitor the quality of EHCPs including multi-agency audits and the use of a software system called Invision360 to have a systematic approach.

Further action: We will embed a rigorous quality assurance process to ensure that EHCPs are maintained and shared appropriately across the partnership. We will also work with families to help them access support before receiving an EHCP.

A pathway to adulthood that supports all vulnerable learners – we have strong educational outcomes and recognise that we must better support young people and families in transitions to adulthood

- A successful supported employment and internships programme with ambitious council-wide plans.
- Over 95% level of participation in Education, Employment or Training for those with EHCPs.
- Launched a 0–25 Disabilities Service to improve transitions between children's and adult social care

Further action: We will work on communicating the pathways to adulthood more clearly, especially in areas outside of education. We will work with families to build confidence in transitions and understand their main sources of concern around the transition to adulthood for young people.



Our Priorities

Our strategy is based on a wide range of evidence, including outcomes data, and co-production with children, young people, and their families. We welcomed challenge from external peers and have incorporated lessons from a Local Government Association (LGA) challenge of our SEND services, that took place in Autumn 2023.

The review highlighted the strong commitment and collaboration among senior leaders across the partnership, leading to positive outcomes for children and young people, particularly in education, with high levels of mainstream inclusion. Significant strengths were noted in Early Years multi-agency working. However, challenges remain, particularly ensuring consistent quality of EHCPs across services. The LGA recommended improvements in data integration, quality assurance, and addressing specialist placement shortages. It recognised that effective practices are already in place that could be further developed and extended.

In our Annual SEND Family Survey 2024, we asked to what extent our six proposed priority areas would make Lambeth a better borough for our children and young people with SEND. 80% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, with less than 4% disagreeing. We continued to develop these in partnership with

colleagues in education, health, and social care, as well as with children, young people, their families, and the community. Over the course of several months, we engaged with:

- Over **70 staff across education and social care** within Lambeth through a series of workshops, and over 50 school staff, primarily SENCOs through an in-person event and survey. We also spoke to over **20 staff across the NHS**, including consultants, therapists, and service managers.

- Over **60 children and young people** in mainstream and special schools, across all age groups, through visits to schools and educational settings. We've also engaged with children and young people through our new SEND Young Inspectors Programme and SEND Youth Forum.

- Over **50 families** through in-person events, including the Lambeth Parent Forum, the Lambeth Country Fair, SEND-sational Funday at Heron Academy, and an event hosted by the Lambeth Portuguese Wellbeing Partnership (LPWP). We also received over 135 responses in each of our new annual **SEND Family Survey**.

- **VCS organisations** through interviews and a focus group, who provide different services to children and young people with SEND, including short breaks.

We used these insights to actively shape our priorities, and the actions that would underpin them. We added an additional priority around Alternative Provision to reflect that this now forms part of the Local Area SEND Inspection.

Our priorities will inform our decisions on investment and will be underpinned by more detailed action plans. We will continue to engage with children and young people and their families to ensure that the strategy is having a real and positive impact on the community. We will do this through our annual survey, co-production, and engagement forum, in-person events, and our SEND Strategic Partnership Board. Each priority has a set of outcome measures to ensure that we understand if we are making progress and are having a positive impact on our children and young people with SEND.

Our Priorities



Inclusive and sustainable provision

We will use our budget in the most effective way possible, ensuring we meet the needs of children and young people in Lambeth. This will include through increasing capacity in our services, in a financially sustainable way.



Effective partnership working

Workers across Lambeth Council, NHS South-East London ICB, and schools, will work closely together to provide the best service possible to children and young people with SEND, and their families.



Smooth transitions with early preparation

Transitions between Early Years, Primary, Secondary and Post-16 Settings will be as smooth as possible, with input from across the partnership as early as possible to ensure good outcomes.



Earlier preparation for adulthood

Transitions to adulthood will be prepared for as early as possible, with input from health and social care, to improve life outcomes alongside education and employment.



Developing our workforce across the partnership

We will support our workforce across Lambeth, through training and support, to understand SEND and respond to a wide range of needs collaboratively.



Amplifying the voice of children, young people and families

Ensuring that children, young people, and their families play a role in individual, operational and strategic decision-making that affects them.



Timely reintegration to mainstream for those in Alternative Provision

Those who attend Alternative Provision should receive a high-quality education and be integrated back into mainstream as soon as possible when appropriate.

Our Priorities

INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE PROVISION

We will use our budget in the most effective way possible, ensuring we meet the needs of children and young people in Lambeth. This will include through increasing capacity in our services, in a financially sustainable way.

Insights from data and community engagement

- An internal review of our SEND capacity and the LGA review that highlighted the need for us to increase our specialist provision capacity.
- Our SENCos highlighted that there needs to be more opportunities to access SEND-related Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for all levels of staff including teaching assistants and senior leaders.
- Our SEND Transport expenditure is unsustainable, risking stability for children and young people.

By 2030

Children and young people with SEND will be able to access the right support, as early as possible. Our approach will be one that is financially sustainable.

What impact looks like

We want a high proportion of those with EHCPs in mainstream settings in Lambeth, with good attainment. Our workforce will have capacity to identify and support a wide range of needs, as early as possible.

Our Plan

Support our educational settings to be inclusive

We want our mainstream education to be as inclusive as possible for a wide range of needs. We will provide resources and expertise through our Three Tier Approach and the Exceptional Needs Grant. We know that needs are changing, so we will support educational settings to understand effective practice, including through specialist training for a range of school staff, including senior leaders and teaching assistants.

Invest in our educational settings to increase the number of specialist places

We know that some of our children and young people would benefit from more specialist education. We will continue to work closely with settings who have shown they can support those with SEND to achieve good outcomes, to expand provision through Resource Bases. We will ensure careful planning with health to ensure that specialist settings are supported.

Ensure a sufficient and sustainable SEND Transport System

We will look at how we commission and deliver SEND

Transport for those 0-25, to ensure that we are achieving value for money. Direct payments for those over 16 could help with flexibility in travel and promoting independence.

Identify needs as early as possible, and make it easy for families to access support

We will continue to build on our work in Early Years and to use a multi-agency approach to identify needs and support. At any point in a child or young person's life, we will assess when needs present, and provide support as soon as possible, including through outside the EHCP process.

Our Priorities

EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Workers across Lambeth Council and NHS South-East London ICB, and schools, will work closely together to provide the best service possible to children and young people with SEND, and their families

Insights from data and community engagement

- Practitioners and frontline staff highlighted the need to build a cross-partnership understanding of what EHCPs should look like and how they should be delivered.
- Parents and carers emphasised the need to communicate the range of services and support on offer in Lambeth in an accessible way, especially through the Local Offer. Families acknowledged that there is good support available but were unsure how or where to access it.
- There are good examples of using data to inform decision-making for individuals. However, we can build on the data from different agencies to inform strategic decisions.

By 2030

Children, young people, and their families will receive support through a joint working approach from education, health, and social care. They will be able to easily access high-quality services that meet their needs.

Our Plan

Ensure EHC Plans are owned and developed by all services to best meet the needs of children and young people

We want to improve quality assurance processes for EHCP processes and implementation, including with other London boroughs. We will invest in technology to help ensure that EHC plans are jointly owned across the partnership and accurately reflect needs.

What impact looks like

We want families to experience a joined-up service from professionals across the partnership, including through the EHCP process. Families should be able to access all the information they need as easily as possible and be signposted to the relevant service or support through the Local Offer.

Use robust data and evidence across the partnership to inform our decisions

We will improve data sharing processes and identify gaps in service provision by launching a new operational dashboard. Our focus will be on continuously improving joint commissioning, decision-making processes, making effective use of robust multi-agency data, and tracking performance metrics.

Maintain an accessible and up-to-date Local Offer that families and practitioners use to understand the full range of services across the council, including for adult services

We will enhance the visibility and accessibility of the Local Offer website through further engagement and improving communication methods with our information sharing networks. We know that many families and practitioners are unaware of the range of services on offer, so we will work to ensure that they feel confident in accessing these independently.

Our Priorities

SMOOTH TRANSITIONS WITH EARLY PREPARATION

Transitions between Early Years, Primary, Secondary and Post-16 Settings will be as smooth as possible, with input from across the partnership as early as possible to ensure good outcomes

Insights from data and community engagement

- Parents and SENCos advocated for improved information about schools and SEND provision, and more consistent communication ahead of transitions
- School SENCos highlighted the benefits of in-person transition meetings and handovers to enable consistent and detailed information-sharing. The support from Lambeth Autism Advisory Service and the Sensory Support Service were identified as being effective in ensuring successful transitions.
- Children may experience exclusions or reduced timetables where transition planning is not thorough enough.
- Through our engagement, we also identified that transition planning needs to extend to services across education, health and social care to provide wraparound support.

By 2030

Children, young people, families, and education settings will be confident about and feel well prepared for transition between each stage of education and will be knowledgeable about where to access additional support or resources where needed.

What impact looks like

We want families to feel supported through transition points, with schools and educational settings having the resource and input from health and social care partners to support children, young people, and their families. Our staff will be able to access the right information and be able to share this with families to support a positive pathway at all stages of transition.

Our Plan

Ensure information is readily available to parents and education settings about different provision available and support available for children and young people.

We will review information on the Local Offer to ensure it is up to date for families and education settings to understand transition processes and support available. We will work with schools to create accessible guides and events about educational settings to help make informed decisions about where children and young people needs can be best met. We will also ensure that information

from key partners across health and social care is shared.

Develop SENCo confidence to support transitions and know what makes transitions successful when supporting the child, family, and new education setting.

We will ensure that we provide the right resources, including a toolkit on transition points. We will host regular events with educational settings to raise awareness, and share information, and promote the Local Authority outreach teams available to support transitions (for example, the Early Years SEN Team, Area SENCo Team, and Pupil Support Services).

Build workforce confidence with delivering Ordinarily Available Provision to meet a range of needs.

We will deliver a programme of SEND training both for internal council officers working across a range of teams (such as social care, health, and contextual safeguarding) and with school staff to support transitions. We will collaborate with education staff to produce guides on Lambeth's Ordinarily Available Provision – where we aim to meet need as early as possible, without the need to go through the EHC process.

Our Priorities

EARLIER PREPARATION FOR ADULTHOOD

The transition to adulthood will be prepared from as soon as children and young people start secondary school, with input from health and social care, to improve life outcomes alongside education and employment.

Insights from data and community engagement

- Parents and carers expressed their concerns around transitions to adulthood and needing more information about different opportunities.
- The transition to adulthood is not only about employment, but young people being part of the community in the ways they want.
- A basic understanding of Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) outcomes and more about career pathways would be useful for SENCOs, including in Primary Settings.

Our Plan

Work with further education settings and employers to promote their offers

We want to ensure our young people are aware of and able to access varied opportunities to continue into further education, employment, and training. We will

By 2030

Young people and their families feel confident about their future as they move from education into employment or other meaningful activity. They feel able to participate in the community, living as independently as they can with the support they need and maintaining good health.

increase the range of supported internship and apprenticeship options available to reflect aspirations. Our SENCOs will have more information and training to support young people and their families to navigate their future, including post-18. This will be reflected in EHCPs and discussed at Annual Reviews from Year 9.

Effectively communicate and meet identified needs to promote the best outcomes when transitioning to adult services

We want children, young people, and their families to feel confident about the health and care services they will be able to access as adults, as early as possible.

What impact looks like

Young people will progress into education and employment and be able to access the opportunities they want to. They will feel confident about their options, and staff will be able to support them on their journey. Families will also feel more confident that young people are equipped with the right skills for adulthood, and can access social, leisure and cultural activities.

We will work together across children's and adults' services to look at ways to make the transition as smooth as possible. Our new 0–25 Disabilities Service will support with streamlining social care transitions.

Build inclusive practice within universal services, and identify needs for more specialist provision

We will carry out audits of local provision across our youth offer, leisure, and libraries to understand barriers to access. Our ambition is to consider the wide range of activities happening in Lambeth, promoting accessibility beyond council services. We will work to increase targeted provision, such

as groups for autistic girls, and the number of providers taking up SEND focused training so they are confident in delivering with and for young people with different needs.

Pilot and roll out life skills training including Independent Travel Training to meet the needs of young people

We want to ensure all our young people can participate in community beyond employment. We will review and update information available through our Local Offer. We will explore options for delivering life skills training across settings, including Independent Travel Training.

Our Priorities

DEVELOPING OUR WORKFORCE ACROSS THE PARTNERSHIP

We will support our workforce across Lambeth, through training and support, to understand SEND and respond to a wide range of needs collaboratively.

Insights from data and community engagement

- Families gave positive feedback about the Area SENCOs while acknowledging issues around sustainability and capacity. They advocated for improved training and awareness beyond SENCOs.
- Practitioners highlighted a need to rethink the role of SENCOs as the main point of contact due to high workloads and workforce retention issues which significantly hinders information sharing.
- Challenges were raised around a lack of knowledge and information across the partnership. Staff felt unsure of who to liaise with on cases involving SEND, as well as behaviour and inclusion leads.

By 2030

All frontline staff will feel confident in working with families who have children and young people with SEND. They will know who they can signpost to where needed and be able to find the appropriate information to support families.

What impact looks like

Staff will feel more confident in understanding SEND and being able to identify and signpost to the relevant services. Families will feel they can trust staff to support them and can access initial help from any frontline service.

Our Plan

Improve consistency of knowledge across the partnership through universal SEND training and embedding a Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) and Designated Clinical Officer (DCO).

We want to ensure that all staff working with children and young people with SEND refresh their knowledge of SEND through a training offer that can be easily access at any time. We will pilot our training with social workers and refine this before scaling-up across the partnership. This should form part of induction for all frontline practitioners. To ensure our workforce has ongoing

support, we will have a DSCO and DCO that will provide support across the local area and SEND Champions across the council.

Expand our support offer to educational settings through our outreach team and Area SENCO teams

We will invest in our outreach teams where we know they are having a positive impact. For example, families and educational settings have praised the new Area SENCO team and welcomed additional support on behaviour and inclusion. We will work with schools and families to understand what support they find most useful, to refine our offer.

Embed the new SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy at all levels of the workforce

We need all frontline staff, their managers, and senior leadership to understand our priorities, and how they can contribute. We will undertake a roadshow to launch our new strategy, to raise awareness of our priorities to a wide range of services. This will help to ensure consistency across the organisation, and alignment between our strategic ambitions and the reality on the ground. We will ensure an action plan is embedded from the new strategy and monitored by the established SEND operational board.

Our Priorities

AMPLIFYING THE VOICE OF CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

Ensuring that children, young people, and their families play a role in individual, operational and strategic decision-making that affects them.

Insights from data and community engagement

- The LGA highlighted evidence of effective engagement, and genuine co-production. However, this is not consistent for all families. Parents and carers were particularly worried about transitions to adulthood, with many not feeling involved in planning.
- Families also felt that they were asked for their thoughts, but there was not always a clear follow-up from different services in the council. They appreciated clear action plans and consistent feedback.
- For young people, our engagement showed a general lack of awareness of how they could get involved, and what level of impact they could have. It was clear that some wanted to get involved, so we need to facilitate this.

By 2030

All children, young people, and their families will have a range of opportunities to input into individual plans, service designs and strategic decisions. Those involved in co-production will be able to point to real examples of how they have influenced decisions.

Our Plan

Create new engagement forums for young people to ensure their voice is included in decision-making

We want to ensure that young people can feed into operational and strategic decision-making. We will embed a SEND Youth Forum and a Young Inspectors Programme and look for further opportunities. Our focus will be on involving young people and helping them to develop professional and life skills.

What impact looks like

We will be able to demonstrate where children and young people and families have been involved in decision-making. We want children and young people and families to feel belonging and ensure that they are satisfied with their involvement. Children and young people and families will feel more confident and develop skills when they are involved in decision-making processes.

Ensure our families voice is captured through our annual survey and other forums and the outcomes are reported on the Local Offer and utilised in action planning

We will embed clear ways of working with residents, including through a Toolkit for practitioners to use when engaging with children and young people with SEND. Our annual surveys will always be followed up by a written report and verbal update, with a clear plan of action to address findings.

Continue our work with Lambeth Parent Forum, whilst identifying advocacy groups that represent the diversity of our borough

We will support Lambeth Parent Forum to expand its reach, as we understand the importance of peer support. We know that some residents feel better supported by those in their community, so we will work with the new VCS team to ensure we hear from those who have low-level English proficiency or face other barriers to accessing services and support.

Our Priorities

TIMELY REINTEGRATION TO MAINSTREAM FOR THOSE IN ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

Those who attend Alternative Provision should receive a high-quality education and be integrated back into mainstream as soon as possible when appropriate.

Insights from data and community engagement

- Reintegration back to mainstream education settings is not consistently timely across provisions.
- The outcomes of the young people that attend Alternative Provision do not always meet their potential.
- Almost four out of five headteachers and behaviour leads stated there was a need for improvement in the range of Alternative Education Providers in Lambeth.

By 2030

Most children and young people are educated in a mainstream setting. For those who may be placed in Alternative Education Provision, we will ensure it is a high-quality provision with a broad and balanced curriculum. We will ensure reintegration is timely and that the child or young person has access to targeted support and achieves excellent outcomes.

What impact looks like

A child or young person who needs to access Alternative Provision will feel supported through their transition, and able to access the opportunities they want. They will have regular contact with a dedicated Family Support Mentor to monitor their progress and reintegrate them into mainstream education as soon as appropriate. Wraparound support will help them to achieve good progress in their educational outcomes.

Our Plan

Expand our early intervention and support through our governance and outreach teams

Our new tiered approach will ensure there is early intervention with support available to schools as soon as there is behaviour that challenges. We will evaluate the approach to ensure that we are reducing the number of suspensions and permanent exclusions. We will work with schools to develop pathways that support students to remain in settings with additional support.

Embed transition processes that bring together different partners to support pupils

We will ensure that there is a timely and robust review process for students on short term placements. Plans will have clear targets, including for reintegration into mainstream. We will build an evidence base on what wraparound support improves reintegration and outcomes for our students.

Build and improve the quality of our Alternative Provision offer, providing an

engaging curriculum and specialist support

We will seek to increase our Alternative Provision pathway offer to provide different provisions according to the need of our children and young people. We will continue our cohort reviews and reintegration review boards to ensure we understand how our pupils in Alternative Provision are performing. These priorities are aligned with our Alternative Education Provision (AEP) Strategy and wider commitment to become a zero permanent exclusion borough.

Monitoring our impact

All partners will be key in delivering this strategy and ensuring it has an impact. This goes beyond the council and NHS, and means collaborative working with our schools, VCS organisations, and central government. We need everyone to understand how they can play a role in delivering these priorities.

Our governance process will be a tool to assure ourselves that we are making progress, and at the right pace. We will have an action plan that will be monitored at our monthly

SEND and Alternative Provision Operations Board, and quarterly SEND and Alternative Provision Strategic Partnership Board. These are chaired by senior leaders from both the council and NHS. The appropriate data and evidence will be provided to Boards to inform discussions and decision-making.

Sources of information will include population data (e.g. number and demographics of those with EHCPs or receiving SEN support), insights on experiences (surveys to families and children and young people, and engagement

events), and outcomes data (e.g. attainment, attendance, exclusions of different cohorts). We will also welcome challenge and support from external organisations, including Ofsted and the CQC.

We will produce an annual report for the community to understand the progress we are making on each of these priorities, and outcomes for our children and young people with SEND. By 2030, we will expect to have achieved the outcomes outlined under each priority, measured through a range of metrics.

Outcome	Example measures
Children and young people with SEND will be able to access the right support, as early as possible. Our approach will be one that is sustainable for future generations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waiting times for assessments in health and social care, including Early Years diagnosis rates • Support accessed outside of EHCP process • Out-of-borough placements for education • Council and ICB budgets
Children, young people, and their families will benefit from a joined-up way of working that integrates education, health, and social care. They will be able to easily access high-quality services that meet their needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeliness, quality, and implementation of EHCPs across the partnership • Reported satisfaction from families around partnership working

Monitoring our impact

Outcome	Example measures
Children, young people, and their families and education settings will be confident about and feel well prepared for transition between each stage of education, and will be knowledgeable about where to access additional support or resources where needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance after key transition points, e.g., Year 1, Year 7 and Year 12 • Experiences of children, young people, and families during transition periods • Experiences of staff working with families during transitions
Young people and their families feel confident about their future as they move from education into employment or other meaningful activity. They feel able to participate in the community, living as independently as they can with the support they need and maintaining good health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence of young people and their families around becoming an adult • Employment and education statistics • Reported happiness and quality of life of those with disabilities • Participation in social and leisure activities for those with SEND
Staff across the partnership will feel confident in supporting children, young people, and their families, presenting with a wide range of needs. They will be able to proactively offer support or signpost to services across the partnership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce confidence in understanding SEND • Recruitment and retention data across the partnership
We want all children, young people, and their families to have the opportunity to input into individual plans, service designs and strategic decisions. We will provide a spectrum of accessible opportunities for engagement, with a clear process for feeding back progress to those engaging. Those involved in co-production will be able to point to real examples of how they have influenced decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction of children and young people • Number of children and young people reached through engagement activity • Satisfaction of families through Annual SEND Family Survey and other engagement forums
Most children and young people are educated in a mainstream setting. For those who may be placed in Alternative Education Provision, we will ensure it is a high-quality provision with a broad and balanced curriculum. We will ensure reintegration is timely and that the child or young person has access to targeted support and achieves excellent outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeliness of reintegration into mainstream • Attendance and attainment of those in Alternative Provision • Experiences of children and young people in Alternative Provision

Additional information and resources



The Local Offer contains information on services children and young people with SEND can access, including from the council, NHS, and VCS organisations. If you have any feedback on the Local Offer, or want to join our working groups, you can contact us via localoffer@lambeth.gov.uk



If you want to submit a request to be featured on the Local Offer, you can email localoffer@lambeth.gov.uk



If you would like to join the Lambeth Parent Forum, a group to support families and carers of children and young people with SEND aged 0-25, please contact info@lambethparentforum.com



If you have any other thoughts about this strategy, or need support from our SEND team, you can contact us via sendsupport@lambeth.gov.uk

